

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

homemakers' chat

FOR USE IN NON-COMMERCIAL BROADCASTS ONLY

U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Friday, May 12, 1944

LIBRARY
CURRENT SERIAL RECORD

MAY 24 1944

9
13 HH
20p. 4

SUBJECT: "A Lift For Each Shift". Information from food distribution officials of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Women have responded patriotically to the call for ~~more workers in industry~~ ^{homemakers in industry}.

One place the number of women now employed really takes on the proportions of an invasion. At the Drave shipyards, across from Pittsburgh, a thousand women have come to work...where there was never a woman before. For shipbuilding has always been thought to be man's work. But now -- their hard welder's helmets taking the place of peacetime spring finery -- these thousand women are doing a topnotch job in speeding landing ships down the ways.

For this inland shipyard was the first plant to build the vitally-important LST's...or Landing Ship: Tanks...the ships that hit the headlines every time our fighting men carry through an amphibious operation.

Maybe it seems strange to you to hear of a shipyard 400 miles from the nearest sea coast. But this shipyard is located on the Ohio River. As soon as the ships are built, the Navy takes them over. They sail the boats nearly two thousand miles down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, all the way to the Gulf...from there they sail them all over the world, to the Central Pacific or the Mediterranean, wherever the ships are needed.

But all shipyards...whether on an ocean or on a river...have some of the same problems. For example, food. Few shipyards even have a closed place where the workers can sit and eat a box lunch. By the nature of the work, a shipyard is mostly out-of-doors and spreads over a wide area. If you were to visit the average shipyard during lunchtime, you'd most likely see the workers sitting around on the hulls of the unfinished ships eating their sandwiches. But not this shipyard.

Maybe it had something to do with the feminine invasion...for women often care more about where and how they eat than men do.

In any case...the workers at this inland shipyard near Pittsburgh have three large cafeterias with tables and chairs...and three canteens...as well as indoor locker rooms where they can eat the lunches they bring with them. And the food in cafeterias and canteens is carefully planned and prepared...as a matter of fact there are eight dietitians who plan the meals.

If you were to visit the shipyard, around the middle of any one of the three shifts, you'd see large food wagons starting out from the central kitchen. If you followed some of the trucks, you'd find them going to the three main cafeterias with salads, hot vegetables, and meat for the workers. The cafeterias provide regular meals. At the largest cafeteria there are four steam tables and four lines. The food service is so efficient and speedy that this cafeteria can serve sixty people a minute! One thing that makes the lines move so fast is that there is only one entree served at each meal...you don't get a choice. But the workers always have a choice of vegetables, salads, desserts, and beverages. And it's been estimated that 43 percent of the workers eat salads, which are made mostly from raw vegetables.

But not all the food wagons are going to the cafeterias. Some are headed for the three canteens...and these trucks carry sandwiches, soup, milk, cookies, and fruit. The canteens don't serve soft drinks. Often the workers buy food at the canteen to supplement the lunches they bring from home. They might bring sandwiches and fruit from home...and then buy a glass of milk and a bowl of soup at the canteen. They can't sit down to eat at the canteen...but that doesn't matter. When the sun is shining they sit outdoors on the hulls of the ships they're building...when the weather is bad they eat in the special locker rooms for men and women.

With a meal service like this one...operating 24 hours a day over such a tremendous area...the management might have quite a problem finding enough people

to work in the kitchen, cafeterias, and canteens. But instead they hit upon a clever idea. They employ local homemakers in the food service...that is, mothers and grandmothers and wives of war workers, who want to do war work. This system works excellently...because the women are used to this kind of work, they enjoy it, they realize the importance of feeding war workers well, and they take real pride in doing the best they can. The shipyard also employs students on a part-time basis in the food service..boys as well as girls. Both homemakers and students get their uniforms, their lunches, and pay by the hour. Often this work stimulates the girls to want to go on to further training in institutional feeding. And some day, the boys will be either good mess sergeants or good husbands...or both...as a result of this experience.

The shipyard management reports that absenteeism has been greatly reduced among the workers...and they give a good part of the credit to this food program. For the dietitians try to see that some information about nutrition and good eating habits reaches the worker along with his food...so that he'll carry the information back to his home. They post the gay War Food Administration posters around the cafeterias...and they place War Food Administration table tent cards on all the tables. Each of these cards has an amusing cartoon on it. The dietitians use a different set in each cafeteria each week, so that the workers won't get so used to them that they no longer look at them. When they collect the cards at the end of the week, they know people have looked at them...because nearly every card will have pencilled "doodlings" on it. And that's how, with good food and improved eating habits, one shipyard solved its feeding problem...cut down absenteeism...and worked toward achieving greatest possible production.

